

## MEMORADUM OF UNDERSTANDING

### **I. Introduction**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), dated May 18, 2022, is by and between The University of Massachusetts Lowell, a public research and educational institution in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; and Lowell Public Schools, a public school district located in Lowell, Massachusetts.

The University of Massachusetts Lowell, hereinafter referred to as “UNIVERSITY”, and Lowell School District, hereinafter referred to as “SCHOOL DISTRICT”; collectively referred to as “PARTNERS”.

The Partners wish to work together in compliance with the following clauses:

### **II. Purpose of the Understanding**

This Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) sets out the terms by which the University and School District will *collaborate to create and support an online dashboard that visualizes data related to school performance, as well as a set of protocols and practices to guide the interpretation and use of data* in compliance with University policies, Massachusetts educational code, and administrative policies within the Lowell Public Schools District.

### **III. Principal Contacts**

The Principal Contact for the University will be Jack Schneider and Elizabeth Zumpe, and Liam Skinner will be the Principal Contact for the School District. Such Principal Contacts may be changed in writing from time to time by their respective Partners.

The University of Massachusetts Lowell:

Jack Schneider  
Associate Professor  
Coburn Hall 240 C, Lowell, MA 01854  
1-(978)-934-4677

Lowell Public Schools:

Liam Skinner  
Chief Schools Officer  
155 Merrimack St., Lowell, MA 01852  
1-(978)-674-4320

The Principal Contacts are responsible for ensuring the conduct of activities listed below.

#### **IV. University Roles and Responsibilities**

University agrees to:

Provide a customized data visualization platform for school quality:

- Provide support and assistance with collecting, inputting, analyzing, and displaying district-provided data for the School Quality Measures dashboard platform developed as part of the Massachusetts Consortium for Innovative Education Assessment
- Collaborate regularly with district and school leaders to customize the data types and displays on the dashboard to fit with district needs

Provide research and development assistance to develop and study a leadership learning system for using the School Quality Measures dashboard to inform continuous improvement:

- Provide expertise in leadership development and design-based research to co-design a learning system for using the dashboard along with methods of continuous improvement, in collaboration with a team of district and school leader collaborators to be referred to as “the co-design team”
- Design and facilitate a three-day summer institute for the co-design team to learn how to use the dashboard along with continuous improvement methods
- Provide prototypes of professional learning materials for the co-design team to adapt for district needs and district internal implementation
- Conduct ongoing design-based research to inform the development of professional learning for principals and central office developmental advisors and assess the effectiveness of the professional learning
- Provide mid-year and end-of-year progress reports
- Synthesize efforts of co-design team into facilitators’ handbooks for delivering principal professional development and for guiding central office developmental advisors
- Disseminate findings and products

Facilitate biweekly meetings with the co-design team throughout the year to:

- Co-plan a year-long professional development series for principals that provides introductory access to dashboard and support for using dashboard as part of multi-step continuous improvement process, resulting in a facilitation handbook for district and school leaders to use for implementing the professional development
- Co-plan a central office developmental advising role and model that differentiates supports to schools depending on needs, resulting in a developmental advisor handbook that helps advisors in how to support schools to connect School Quality Measures dashboard to school improvement planning and differentiate supports for moderate and intensive-needs schools
- Provide support and space for the co-design team to systematically provide input about the data dashboard, reflect on ongoing learning processes and challenges, make adaptations, and build district and school leaders’ capacity for leadership for learning



## **V. School District Roles and Responsibilities**

Lowell Public Schools agrees to:

Contribute data and assist with data collection for a customized data visualization platform for school quality:

- At least twice annually (or more frequently if so choosing), provide administrative datasets formatted correctly for input into the platform
- At least twice annually (or more frequently if so choosing), devote time and effort towards messaging and generating interest in the dashboard and its data types to encourage high rates of participation in data collection efforts to populate the dashboard
- On a regular basis throughout the school year, provide dedicated time and opportunities for district leaders, principals, and/or teachers to communicate feedback about the platform or requests for customization

Facilitate recruitment and support the success of the co-design team:

- Provide support, encouragement, and release time for designated district and school leader members to attend three-day summer institute and bi-weekly meetings thereafter
- Provide logistical support with scheduling and attendance at co-design meetings, including for a three-day summer institute and biweekly meetings thereafter
- Provide additional compensation as appropriate for LPS employee participation in meetings that occur outside of contract hours or contract year

Follow through with implementation of designed learning materials and opportunities created through the co-design team:

- Allot and protect designated time for district leaders and school leaders to regularly learn how to use the data platform and a multi-step continuous improvement process
- Using materials, activities, and facilitation guides created by the co-design team, nominate LPS representatives that will facilitate: a three-day principal institute followed by monthly principal academies, a one-day teacher professional development workshop, and quarterly/monthly school site visits for differentiated school supports
- Provide additional compensation as appropriate for LPS employees' participation in meetings that occur outside of contract hours or contract year

Create enabling conditions for UML partners to carry out research:

- Provide access and communication that assists with recruiting participants and collecting data for ongoing design-based research
- Establish procedures and approvals for data sharing for the purpose of research, with appropriate precautions for student privacy in keeping with standards in the field

This MOU shall take effect upon signing by both Partners and shall remain in effect for a period from May 18, 2022 to June 30, 2025. The provisions of this MOU may only be amended or updated at any time through mutual written agreement by both Partners.

The MOU may be renewed at the end of this period by mutual written agreement by both Partners.

Any Partner can terminate this MOU and any other related agreement, workplan, and budget at any time and for any reason by giving 30 days prior written notice to the other Partner. Provided, however, that in the event any Partner fails to perform any of its obligations under this MOU, the other Partner shall have the right to terminate this MOU or any related agreement immediately upon written notice.

To the full extent allowed by law, each party hereto agrees to be responsible for its own wrongful or negligent acts or omissions, or those of its officers, agents, or employees in performance under this Agreement.

This MOU shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Parties will bring any legal action that arises out of this Agreement in the Massachusetts Superior Court in Suffolk County.

## **VII. Signatures of Parties**

This Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) embodies the entirety and complete understanding and agreement between the Partners, and no amendment will be effective unless signed by both Partners. If the terms of this MOU are acceptable and in agreement, please sign and date this letter.

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL

\_\_\_\_\_  
(University Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

FOR LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School District Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)